

INSIDE

Long run

Joan Steinburg will step away from the Normal Public Library board after 33 years of service, including more than 12 years as president.

Local, A3



In a groove

Dwight pitcher Owen Pulver has notched three no-hitters — including a perfect game — after working hard on his mechanics in the offseason.

Sports, B1



Top honor

A business luncheon honors Amanda Jones with the Top Administrative Professional award.

Money, C1

Key player

Dennis Scott, a man with the title of "official organizer for the Buster Keaton Society," will be making a visit to the BCPA.

GO!, D1

WEATHER

Sunny



Today's weather symbol was drawn by Paiton Van, Stevenson Elementary School, Bloomington.



KERRI ELLIOTT, For The Pantagraph

Kerri Elliott works with a group of teachers during a breakout session at a workshop in Siha, Tanzania. The teachers are making a list of their biggest challenges in teaching students with special needs.

A special calling

ISU grad helps develop, direct autism care for Tanzanian kids

Lenore Sobota

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NORMAL — When Kerri Elliott graduated from Illinois State University in 2002 with a degree in special education, she never suspected it would lead to helping organize a program to help children with intellectual disabilities in the African country of Tanzania.

In 2008, on summer break from teaching at Antioch Community High School, she went to Tanzania as a volunteer special education teacher.

The mother of a son with autism approached her.

About ACT

Autism Connects Tanzania's mission is to:

- ▶ Educate Tanzanian families, organizations and intellectual disabilities.
- ▶ Create a network to better serve the population.
- ▶ Protect children with intellectual disabilities from harm.

Website: www.AutismConnectsTanzania.org

"When she heard I was a special education teacher, she asked me a lot of questions," Elliott said.

Among those questions was whether Elliott could help her start a program to help people like her son.

Through a U.S.-based organization called EdPowerment, Autism Connects Tanzania, was formed.

Elliott spoke on campus

Wednesday night about the work she has done.

Her message to those in attendance, particularly special education students, was, "They can take their education and make a difference."

Stacey Jones Bock, chair of ISU's special education department, said Elliott "really embodies what teaching is all about."

Bock said the department is proud of its graduates.

"This is one success story out of hundreds," Bock said. "This is a really big one."

The impact Elliott is having is huge, Bock said, adding, "It's a population of children who otherwise might not receive services."

ACT's services are not limited to those with autism.

Bock and Jeff Bakken were two professors singled out by Elliott for giving her a thorough understanding of learning disabilities

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